

Mapping Assets to Target Public and Private Investment

by
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Rapid development presents real economic opportunities, but sometimes it's not so easy for urban citizens to take advantage of them. Once-stable neighborhoods have seen middle-income families displaced, shortages of decent and affordable housing near jobs and transportation, and depletion of natural resources. The problem is acute in Chicago, but not exclusive to Chicago. The



Chicago Full Circle project addresses the problem with a system that accelerates the flow of information between planners and neighborhoods and renders that information in a more detailed, timely, and usable fashion.

Planners, policy makers, and community activists agree that tracking, mapping, and articulating the present and future contours of neighborhoods is an indispensable component of effective urban planning. Online tools that give neighborhood residents the capacity to participate in this process are the focus of Chicago Full Circle, an initiative of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission.

Neighborhood assets can include historic buildings, natural spaces, schools and parks; as well as the skills and talents of the people who live there. Once a community has developed an inventory of assets, residents can develop a vision for the future and a plan for achieving that vision. Neighborhood asset mapping can help overcome the disconnect between residents and planning and development decisions that affect their neighborhoods.



Chicago Full Circle will deliver web-based planning, mapping, and database tools to community development organizations; enable channeling of detailed parcel-level inputs from neighborhoods to regional planners and analysts; and create a process by which neighborhoods and small municipalities can build consensus around goals and strategies through deliberative public interaction. The goal is to improve targeting of public and private investments in neighborhood development; build higher levels of public participation in neighborhood planning activities; and increase the effectiveness of regional planning.

TOP has supported several projects focusing on asset mapping in the past. The Chicago Full Circle project will add to this developing body of knowledge by helping communities improve and expand collaboration among banks, neighborhood development organizations, local businesses, and funders.